



Repairs & Maintenance Policy

Department: Property Service

Author: Service Improvement & Policy Team

Date Issued: Jan 2009 To be reviewed: Jan 2010

Version Number: 5

CONTENTS	PAGE NO.
1. INTRODUCTION	3
2. Definition.....	3
3. AIMS & OBJECTIVES	3
4. POLICY STATEMENT	3
5. LEGISLATION AND REGULATION.....	3
6. THE DECENT HOMES STANDARD	3
7. GAS SAFETY & SERVICING	3
8. AIDS & ADAPTATIONS.....	3
9. ASBESTOS & WATER HYGIENE MANAGEMENT.....	3
10. ENVIRONMENTAL CONSIDERATIONS.....	3
11. PLANNED AND MECHANICAL MAINTENANCE	3
12. RESPONSIVE DAY TO DAY REPAIRS	3
13. THE RIGHT TO REPAIR	3
14. RECHARGEABLE REPAIRS.....	3
15. TENANT RESPONSIBILITIES.....	3
16. ACHIEVING VALUE FOR MONEY.....	3
17. CONFIDENTIALITY	3
18. EQUALITY & DIVERSITY	3
19. RESIDENTS' PARTICIPATION	3
20. MONITORING & EVALUATION.....	3
21. CUSTOMER SERVICE STANDARDS.....	3
22. HEALTH & SAFETY	3



1. INTRODUCTION

As a Social Landlord, One Housing Group (OHG) recognises meeting residents' expectations of a high standard of service delivery is essential. OHG acknowledge that the provision of a value for money repairs service that is both responsive and of the highest technical competence is one of its highest priorities. OHG has prepared this policy after consultation with residents. This policy should be considered in conjunction with the OHG **Repairs and Maintenance Procedures**.

2. Definition

This policy covers the following areas:

- Decent Homes Standard
- Gas Safety & servicing
- Aids and Adaptations
- Planned Maintenance
- Asbestos & Water Hygiene Management
- Environmental Considerations
- Planned & Mechanical Maintenance
- Responsive Day to Day Repairs
- Emergency out of hours repairs
- The Right to Repair
- Rechargeable Repairs
- Tenant Responsibilities

3. AIMS & OBJECTIVES

Aims

- to manage repairs and maintenance to the homes of its residents
- to comply with all relevant government legislative requirements
- to ensure that all residents live in a safe and secure environment at all times

Objectives

- to set a strategic, long term approach to maintaining decent, sustainable homes
- to engage efficiently with residents about their homes
- to manage effective planned and capital programmes
- to run an effective responsive repairs service
- to continuously improve performance
- to give the highest levels of residents satisfaction
- to provide a value for money service

4. POLICY STATEMENT

OHG is committed to providing a high quality service and all staff and contractors are trained to work towards this aim. This policy recognises that a cost efficient, effective and resident orientated repairs and maintenance service is essential. As a landlord, OHG have a responsibility to protect the value of its housing stock and to ensure that the service standards and obligations made to its residents in respect of their homes are honoured. This policy accepts that the actual landlords of the properties this policy relates to are the member housing associations of OHG. However, for the purpose of this policy document, OHG will represent the individual housing associations.

5. LEGISLATION AND REGULATION

- Landlord & Resident Act 1985
- Housing Act 1985
- Secure residents of Local Housing Authorities (Right to Repair)
- Regulations 1994
- Defective Premises Act 1972
- Environmental Protection Act 1990
- Commonhold & Leasehold Reform Act 2002
- Disability Discrimination Act 1995
- Housing Grants, Construction and Regeneration Act 1996
- Gas Safety (Installation and Use) Regulations 1998
- Management of Health and Safety at Work Regulations 1999
- Building Regulations Act 1984
- The Construction (Design and Management) Regulations 1994
- Control of Asbestos at Work Regulations 2002 (CAW)
- Asbestos (Licensing) Regulations 1983 (ASLIC)
- Asbestos (Prohibitions) Regulations 1992
- Asbestos Worker Protection Directive
- Party Wall Act 1996
- Management of Health and Safety at Work Regulations 1999
- Control of Substances Hazardous to Health 1999
- Water Supply (Water Fittings) Regulations 1999
- Health and Safety at Work Act 1974, Sections 2, 3 and 4
- The Health and Safety Commission's Approved Code of Practice
- Pertaining to the control of Legionella bacteria in water systems 1999 (document L8)
- The Management of Health and Safety at Work Regulations 1999
- Water supply (Water fittings) Regulations 1999
- HHSRS - the Housing Health and Safety Rating System
- EU Procurement Law and associated regulations

6. THE DECENT HOMES STANDARD

In the year 2000 the Government announced that all public sector homes must be brought up to a decent standard by 2010. They published the Decent Homes Standard, a set of minimum criteria which all homes must meet. To meet the standard, homes must have modern facilities, be in a reasonable state of repair and be warm and weather proof. The standard applies to all social housing except leasehold and shared ownership properties. OHG has an Asset Management Strategy to invest and refurbish its properties to meet the requirements of the Decent Homes Standard.

Dwellings which fail to meet the Decent Homes criterion are:

- those containing one or more hazard assessed as serious under the Housing Health & Safety Rating System (HHSRS)
- those in which one or more of the key building components are old and need replacing or major repair
- those in which two or more of the other building components are old and need replacing or major repair,

and those which lack three or more of the following:

- a reasonably modern kitchen (20 years old or less)
- a kitchen with adequate space and layout
- a reasonably modern bathroom (30 years old or less)
- an appropriately located bathroom and WC
- adequate insulation against external noise (where external noise is a problem)
- adequate size and layout of common areas for blocks of flats

A home lacking two or fewer of the above is still classed as decent, therefore it is not necessary to modernise kitchens and bathrooms if a home meets the remaining criteria.

- it provides a reasonable degree of thermal comfort
- it has both effective insulation and efficient heating

General Principals of Application

Decent homes must be sustainable in the long-term. Decisions on which homes to invest in must be made in the context of the long term demand for the stock. Decent Homes work should not be undertaken in isolation from wider mixed-communities schemes and regeneration programmes. The following should be taken into consideration:

- Landlords are not expected to make a home decent if this is against a resident's wishes as work can be undertaken when the dwelling is next void
- Landlords should have regard to Government environmental sustainability objectives in specifying and designing works and components in maintenance programmes
- Landlords must comply with the current Building Regulations, and in general should use the Regulations as a guide as far as possible
- Landlords are not expected to carry out only that work which contributes to making homes decent

7. GAS SAFETY & SERVICING

OHG is committed to meeting its legislative requirements ensuring all of its homes with a gas supply have a valid CP12 Certificate. OHG will service all gas appliances and boilers for all of its homes within 12 months of the anniversary of the previous service date, recognising the vital importance of this Health and Safety commitment on behalf its residents. OHG aims to ensure that all appliances within its housing stock, irrespective of the tenure type, have an annual gas service. However, in respect of leaseholders and Shared Owners, OHG can only advise residents of their responsibilities in respect of their leasehold commitments, legal and regulatory requirements. Any tenants who fail to allow access to carry out this service will be subject to all necessary steps in order to gain access, which may result in the loss of their home.

OHG is committed to the provision of a high quality gas servicing and repairs service that:

- achieves the promises made to its residents
- properly discharges its legal and regulatory obligations
- preserves the safety of its residents
- protects the value of its housing stock

OHG will enter into arrangements to operate a 24 hour emergency repairs service and carry out annual safety checks and servicing of gas fired equipment and installations that it owns. This service will be provided to all properties, except those belonging to leaseholders/Shared Owners, in order to:

- reduce the risk of danger to residents, or
- reduce the risk of significant loss or damage to the property

OHG will upgrade boilers and remove any gas fires that fail their annual inspection. Any faulty gas appliance owned by the resident that is discovered to be connected to the system will have a 'defective appliance' label attached and will be disconnected.

OHG will seek to ensure that annual safety checks and servicing is undertaken in all tenanted properties. In order to achieve it will send an annual reminder to all of its leaseholders/Shared Owners.

Through its new partnering arrangements OHG will implement a Code of Conduct for gas servicing to ensure high levels of resident satisfaction. It will ensure that all of its actions reflect this policy and relating procedures by monitoring compliance and performance. OHG will provide residents with information on its achievements.

Please refer to the OHG **Gas Safety & Servicing Procedure** for detail of the process followed by OHG staff and contractors.

8. AIDS & ADAPTATIONS

OHG commits to facilitating and supporting independent living, by carrying out alterations to meet the special needs of individuals to enhance their lifestyle and where appropriate enable them to remain in their current home. In this respect OHG will work with Local Authorities (LAs) and other appropriate agencies to ensure funding is available to enable this to happen.

OHG assists residents to secure aids and adaptations to their homes by:

- directly undertaking the work
- seeking grants from the local authority and/or other agencies when necessary
- assisting the resident in applying for a Disabled Facility Grant (DFG).

OHG will maintain all aids and adaptations and will replace these at the end of their economic life provided they are still required. Aids and adaptations may include:

- grab rails, door alterations, ramps, handrails, stair lifts etc
- low access baths, provision of showers, lever taps, wc adjustments
- alterations to kitchen units, raising electrical sockets and lowering switches.

In meeting the above objectives, OHG together with its partner LAs will provide a responsive service to residents who are or become vulnerable or who have special needs arising through disability or infirmity. In respect to actual installation, aids and adaptations are split into two types, major and minor, with varying timescales, cost and the amount of actual work to be carried out to install the aid or make the adaptations.

For minor work the job must be completed within 28 days of being raised. Adaptations that require major building work are subject to planning permission and building regulations and therefore the timescales for completion will be longer. Progress is monitored via an electronic spreadsheet that details:

- all requests, the status, all contact with residents and actions taken
- budget and Disabled Funding Grant (DFG) funding
- satisfaction with OHG and contractors
- total elapsed times and outstanding works

Please refer to the OHG [Aids & Adaptations Procedure](#) for detail of the process followed by OHG staff and contractors.

9. ASBESTOS & WATER HYGIENE MANAGEMENT

Asbestos:

OHG and any contractor working on its behalf will adhere to Government legislation and regulations for asbestos management. OHG will ensure that any risk of exposure to asbestos for residents, staff and contractors is eliminated where possible, or reduced to an absolute minimum by managing risk effectively. OHG has an asbestos register within its Asset stock database that feeds into its housing management software Universal Housing.

This creates an alert when a property is called up on the system. Those contractors who have direct on-line access will also receive the alert. Those that do not will be advised on the paper order and by the officer placing the work.

Water Hygiene:

OHG will manage the water hygiene of its properties in accordance with the relevant legislation. OHG will take any necessary measures to prevent exposure of its staff, residents and others to any hazard, which could arise due to poor water hygiene management. OHG will appoint a competent person(s) to undertake suitable and sufficient risk assessments of any hot and cold water systems, water systems incorporating a cooling tower, water systems incorporating an evaporative condenser (air conditioning unit) and any other plant and systems containing water. If the assessment, undertaken in phase 1 reveals that there is a reasonable foreseeable risk the appointed person(s) shall take responsibility and provide supervision for the implementation of precautions and shall be monitored by Asset Management. The appointed person(s) shall have such ability, instruction, information, training and resources to enable them to carry out their tasks competently and safely.

10. ENVIRONMENTAL CONSIDERATIONS

OHG fully support the Government's environmental and sustainability initiatives and is committed to delivering the requirements of the Home Energy Efficiency Act 1995, an integral part of Agenda 21. OHG is committed to embracing Government recommendations wherever possible and this includes those directed at combating fuel poverty. OHG recognises that by reducing energy use it can help towards reducing the cost to the environment in terms of carbon dioxide emissions. Working with local partners and residents OHG aims to:

- reduce fuel poverty
- reduce carbon monoxide emissions
- improve energy performance of domestic and public buildings
- increase awareness of energy efficiency

In order to achieve the aims outlined above, OHG installs a number of energy efficiency measures in homes whenever possible, including:

- UPVC double glazed windows and doors
- Cavity wall insulation
- External thermally insulated cladding
- 250mm loft insulation
- High efficiency condensing boilers
- High specification heating controls
- Hot water cylinder insulation
- Low energy lighting and bulbs

OHG will also have regard to the impact of its activities on the environment by:

- embracing the principle of sustainability of communities
- monitoring the energy efficiency of the housing stock particularly by increasing the SAP ratings of all properties
- improving the energy efficiency of the housing stock through cost effective use of the repair and improvement programme
- choosing, whenever practical, low maintenance and energy efficient materials
- assessing the visual or other environmental impact of its programmes
- improving recycling and waste management

11. PLANNED AND MECHANICAL MAINTENANCE

Planned maintenance is work carried out on a pre-planned basis to maintain the general condition of property and fittings provided by OHG. It will ensure that knowledge of the condition of the stock and particularly the mechanical and electrical plant within the stock is maintained. The servicing of all Mechanical and Electrical equipment requiring maintenance will be carried out on a periodic basis in accordance with regulatory standards, manufacturer's instructions or good trade practice.

12. RESPONSIVE DAY TO DAY REPAIRS

OHG will provide a service, where all repair requests will be booked through a Customer Contact Centre. All repairs (with the exception of specialist work requiring contact with a third party) will be made by appointment with the resident. The aim will be to minimise the time between a request for a repair and its completion, unless the repair can be more cost effectively carried out as part of a programme of batched, planned or cyclical works as described in point 11 above. Our emphasis for responsive repairs is to arrange an appointment during first contact with the resident and complete the repair in one visit.

Reporting Arrangements

Residents may report repairs by any of the following means:

- By telephone:
 - Community or Toynbee London: **0300 123 99 66**
 - Toynbee Berkshire: **0800 587 9941**
 - Island Homes: **0800 783 6337**
- via the OHG website: [**www.onehousinggroup.co.uk**](http://www.onehousinggroup.co.uk)
- in person at your local OHG office
- in writing to your local office

Appointment Times

OHG offer appointments for the completion of repairs and pre and post inspections. The following options will be given:

- Morning: 8 am to 1 pm
- Afternoon: 12 am to 5pm

Priority Categories

Timescales for the commencement and completion of works will be arranged within OHG's approved priority categories listed below. Vulnerable residents, such as people of old age or with disabilities will always be considered a priority.

- **Emergency Repairs**
Attend within 2 hours and complete / make safe within 24 hours. Any follow up work to be raised as a new job and placed within its appropriate category.
- **Urgent Repairs**
Attend within 3 working days, complete within 5 working days.
- **Routine Repairs**
Attend within 5 working days, complete within 20 working days.

Batched Repairs

These will be completed within 3 months with the exception of those repairs which are larger or more complex in nature that can be scheduled as part of a programme of works. This will reduce administrative and overhead costs and adhere to economies of scale. These repairs include:

- path renewals
- rebuilding of brick walls
- fence and boundary maintenance

A list of the types of repairs that fall into each category can be found in the OHG **Residents' Handbook**. If the resident requests the appointment beyond the timescale, this will be accommodated with the exception of emergency repairs.

Operative empowerment

Operators will be empowered to undertake necessary work to complete repairs when the repair involved is more than the original specification indicates.

No access

Where access cannot be gained for a standard appointment, the repair will be passed back to the contact centre via a special contractor's hotline for the appointment to be rescheduled. Where the repair is an emergency or a health and safety matter then OHG will continue to make contact.

Pre-Inspection

Some jobs will require a pre-inspection before the repair is arranged. These will include damp-related problems, re-plastering where the scope of the job is not known or if the diagnosis given by the resident is not detailed enough. An appointment will be made when necessary and carried out within 4 working days.



Out of hour’s Emergency Repairs

Access for emergency repairs out of normal working hours (8.00 a.m. to 6.00 p.m.) can be accessed by the normal responsive repairs telephone numbers. All repair calls will be switched automatically through to OHG’s out of hours service. Only those repairs categorised as emergencies are dealt with out of office hours. If the reported repair is deemed not to be an emergency then the resident will be asked to call back in the morning to make an appointment.

13. THE RIGHT TO REPAIR

Residents have a right to expect repairs to be completed within OHG’s set timescales and OHG is committed to ensuring that its staff and contractors perform to its published **Customer Service Standards**. If a qualifying repair cannot be completed within an agreed timescale, the resident has the right to request our management team to instruct a second contractor to complete the work. Where the second contractor also fails to complete the work within the agreed time OHG will pay compensation to the resident.

Qualifying Repairs

Repairs that qualify for the Right to Repair terms notes above are repairs to a resident’s home which do not cost more than £250 and which, if not carried out within a specified period is likely to jeopardise the health, safety or security of the resident.

The Right to Repair does not apply in the following circumstances:

- the resident has told OHG that they no longer want the qualifying repair carried out
- where the resident has failed to provide details for the contractor to gain access to their home
- access for an inspection or for the repair to be carried out has not been made available
- where the contractor needs to order special parts to complete the repair
- when severe weather conditions prevent the contractor from completing the repair.

Under circumstances of an exceptional nature, which prevent the work being done, it would be unreasonable to expect the contractor to respond within the prescribed period. For example, where the contractor needs to order special parts to complete the repair or when inclement weather dictates that work can not commence or be completed.

Defect Prescribed period (in working days)

Total loss of electric power	1
Partial loss of electric power	3
Unsafe power or lighting socket or electrical fitting	1
Total loss of water supply	1
Partial loss of water supply	3
Total or partial loss of gas supply	1
Blocked flue to open fire or boiler	1

Total or partial loss of space or water heating between 31 October and 1 May	1
Total or partial loss of space or water heating between 30 April and 1 November	3
Blocked or leaking foul drain, soil sack or (where there is no working toilet in the dwelling house) toilet pan	1
Toilet not flushing (where there is no other working toilet in the dwelling house)	1
Blocked sink, bath or basin	3
Tap which cannot be turned	3
Leaking from water or heating pipe, tank or cistern	1
Leaking roof	7
Insecure external window, door or lock	1
Loose or detached banister or hand rail	3
Rotten timber flooring or stair treads	3
Door entry-phone not working	7

14. RECHARGEABLE REPAIRS

Circumstances sometimes arise when it is necessary to charge existing residents for repairs work that OHG has had to carry out outside of their responsibilities. OHG will, at all times, ensure that there is a consistent approach to rechargeable repairs and to recovering costs. Residents will be advised that the cost of the repair is rechargeable to them and advised of the repayment options available to them.

The resident will be responsible for the repair or replacement of any item in the property which is damaged through neglect, carelessness or deliberate action on the part of the resident or their family or any individual knowingly allowed into the property. OHG reserves the right to undertake any of the above work itself and may recharge the resident for the full cost of carrying out the repair.

15. TENANT RESPONSIBILITIES

Some repairs are the responsibility of the tenant and not OHG; such repairs are defined within the OHG [Tenant Handbook](#). The resident is responsible for the maintenance, repair or replacement of the categories set out in their tenancy agreement. The tenant will also be responsible for the repair or replacement of any item in a property damaged due to neglect, carelessness or deliberate action on the part of the tenant, their family, friends or anyone visiting them.

16. ACHIEVING VALUE FOR MONEY

Operating as an efficient and effective business, demonstrating value for money to its customers with a high level of service is a key strategic objectives for OHG. OHG has a range of mechanisms in place to demonstrate and improve this, including benchmarking cost and performance data, market testing of the whole repairs service against other Housing Associations and external providers and undertaking internal Business Processing Re-engineering reviews. Benchmarking activity is carried out for the whole of the



responsive repairs, voids and capital programme delivery services along with other specific activities around call centre handling, transport and productivity.

OHG are continually exploring ways and initiatives to improve the Value for Money of our services through efficiency and effectiveness and have plans to introduce further enhancements to the repairs service during 2008/9 such as improved appointments scheduling system and mobile working. These initiatives will provide OHG with efficiency gains giving a competitive edge in the market.

Multi-skilling

OHG's contractors encourage their trade staff to add allied skills additional to their main trade increasing the potential for jobs to be completed in one visit, resident satisfaction and efficiency savings.

17. CONFIDENTIALITY

Under the Data Protection Act 1998 and the Human Rights Act 1998, all personal and sensitive organisational information, however received, is treated as confidential. This includes:

- anything of a personal nature that is not a matter of public record about a resident, client, applicant, staff or committee member
- sensitive organisational information

Officers will ensure that they only involve other agencies and share information with the consent of the resident concerned, unless:

- OHG is required to by law
- the information is necessary for the protection of children

18. EQUALITY & DIVERSITY

OHG recognises the needs of a diverse population and always acts within the scope of its own **Equality and Diversity Policy**, the Human Rights Act 1998, The Disability Discrimination Act, and Race Relations Act.

OHG works closely with its LA partners and local communities to ensure a fair representation of residents monitoring the delivery of responsive repairs, planned works, cyclical works and servicing. It has a clear understanding of its resident community with clear regularly updated service user profiles. The Performance Information Team is responsible for recording, analysing and monitoring information on ethnicity, vulnerability and disability.

Home Visits by OHG Surveyors, Officers and Contractors

OHG has a responsibility to protect its vulnerable resident's. It is OHG's policy that no OHG Surveyor, Officer or Contractor will enter a resident's home unless there is a responsible adult present, unless there is evidence of a clear risk to any person(s).



Vulnerable residents

Vulnerable residents, such as people of old age or with disabilities, will always be considered a priority when booking repair work.

19. RESIDENTS' PARTICIPATION

Resident involvement plays a key role in developing the future direction of the repairs and maintenance service. OHG consult with residents and encourage resident feedback in the preparation of its programmes for improvement through the following resident groups:

- Maintenance Forum
- Leaseholder Forum
- Consumer Panel
- Area Forum
- Quality of Life Group
- Senior Residents' Group
- Asian Women's Group
- Sure Start Mothers and Baby Group

Aftercare Service

Resident satisfaction is central to OHG's activities within the repairs and maintenance service. Satisfaction levels are used to identify its customers' experiences and expectations to drive future improvements within the service. OHG has a specialised Aftercare Team who attempts to contact, by telephone, all residents who have just had a repairs appointment to record feedback and remedy any problems that may have occurred. Paper satisfaction surveys are also sent out to residents with all appointment confirmation letters.

20. MONITORING & EVALUATION

OHG will evaluate and measure its performance and benchmark itself against other Social Housing Providers through the use of Performance Indicators. These are listed below:

- Contractors' job completion data
- residents' satisfaction with repairs service
- residents' satisfaction with contractor performance
- appointments kept
- 1st time fix
- gas compliancy
- resident satisfaction with boiler installations
- complaints monitoring
- surveyor call back performance
- surveyor post inspection performance
- contractor quality control targets
- contractor jobs overdue
- aftercare service monitoring
- void turnaround
- resident satisfaction with planned maintenance programme



- Aids & Adaptations turnaround time

Maximum 10% emergency repairs

The Government has set a target stating that no more than 10% of all raised repairs should be emergency repairs. Social landlords must keep their housing stock in good condition to reduce the risk of emergencies such as leaks and failing boilers. OHG aims to achieve this target by:

- Analysing the emergencies issued to diagnose further long term remedial or planned works
- allocating a technical officer to the Contact Centre to give repairs advice and working practice updates
- using IT to achieve a consistent approach to the allocation of repairs

21. CUSTOMER SERVICE STANDARDS

OHG will:

- carry out annual gas servicing checks and advise leaseholders & shared owners to arrange annual checks
- ensure all operatives wear readily identifiable uniforms and carry identification
- ensure that all work repairs work undertaken is completed to a high standard
- assist residents with special needs and treat vulnerable residents as a priority
- ensure wherever possible residents are not left overnight without essential facilities
- leave all properties clean and tidy following any servicing or remedial work
- monitor resident satisfaction to develop and improve the servicing standards
- invite residents to participate in a project review team

22. HEALTH & SAFETY

Officers will follow OHG's **Health and Safety Policy** at all times.